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for KENNETH D. BLACKFAN

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Physician-in-Chief of the Children's Hospital,
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1923 - 1941

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The Story of an Education

I WILL open these exercises by reading a resolution which was adopted at a recent meeting of the faculty of the Harvard Medical School. This resolution gives in outline the story of Kenneth Blackfan and so will provide a background for the remarks of the other speakers. The word story is suitable. Most of us reached our stations in medicine by travelling the valley road through lush meadows of educational opportunity. His path lay over the hills. To follow it was adventure and required courage and great fidelity of purpose.

* * * *

Kenneth Blackfan began his career in medicine in the year 1905 as a country doctor. Eighteen years later he became Thomas Morgan Rotch Professor of Pediatrics, and for another eighteen years he carried his department forward with consummate skill and success. There is no need to recount to this faculty his large services to the Harvard Medical School. But, in order that our admiration of him may be complete, the record of a continuous and hard-won education which brought the country practitioner to a position of high effectiveness in university medicine, should be before us.

He was born and spent his boyhood in Cambridge, New York, a pleasantly situated hamlet about forty miles north of Albany. On graduating from the local high school he entered the Albany Medical School of Union University. During his third year Richard Pearce came to the school as Professor of Pathology and Bacteriology. Kenneth Blackfan responded to the enthusiasm of this fine student of disease. He begged, and won, permission to work in his laboratory through the following summer. A warm student-master friendship sprang up. This friendship determined his future course in medicine. But not immediately. On receiving his medical degree at the age of twenty-two, he returned to his home town and for the next four years drove about the countryside on the varied errands of a general practitioner. He always recalled those horse and buggy years with pleasure, and there are older citizens of that region who still delight in relating therapeutic triumphs of "young Doctor Ken". But there were disturbing visits to nearby Dorset, just over the line in Vermont, where Richard Pearce spent his summers. There he found friendly interest and encouragement which gradually produced the determination to find out what might lie over the horizon in medicine.

So, in the year 1909, the young country doctor set out for Philadelphia with letters from Richard Pearce. There he was kindly received by Samuel Hamill and David Edsall and a place soon found for him as resident-in-charge of a foundling hospital. Kenneth Blackfan thereupon became a pediatrician. Two years later John Howland, who had accepted the Professorship of Pediatrics in the newly reconstructed Medical School of Washington University, offered him a residency. This was a very large stroke of fortune. It removed the adventurer from his lonely post in the foundling hospital and, after two years in St. Louis, placed him in the group of young pediatricians which assembled around Howland in Baltimore when he succeeded Von Pirquet at Johns Hopkins in the year 1912. Here there was a newly built hospital for infants and children, and laboratory equipment far beyond anything which had yet been given a clinical department in this country. Howland's group used their large opportunity with enthusiasm and under his wise guidance the laboratories were from the outset importantly productive. It was the place to be in pediatrics at that time. The most beloved member of this group was the resident physician. No one watched work under way in the laboratories with a more eager interest. And he found time to participate. By way of instance, his work with Dandy on internal hydrocephalus has come to deserve that lofty adjective, classic. His demonstration that dehydration is a much more dangerous feature of diarrhoeal disease than is the state of acidosis which Howland and Marriott had just discovered shifted emphasis from alkali therapy to fluid replacement and produced the basis of our present effective treatment of this chief scourge of infants.

When Kenneth Blackfan reached the age of thirty-seven, he was still a resident. He had held this modest post for eleven years. But he had reached his goal. He knew the existing body of knowledge in his chosen field, he knew its frontiers and he knew where the paths of progress lay. He was a superb diagnostician and a master of detail of hospital care of patients. Behind all this, four years of countryside practice had given him resourcefulness in use of means at hand and an understanding of the social realities of the physician's task. He was in all respects qualified for the diverse duties of departmental headship. His first commission came in the year 1920 when he was appointed Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Cincinnati. There he built up his department and guided a large development of hospital equipment with outstanding success. Then in 1923 the fruits of eighteen years of education toward leadership fell to Harvard.

Why did he follow this long and economically narrow path with such serene contentment? This question would have annoyed Kenneth Blackfan. His philosophy was remarkably uncomplicated. There was nothing which could be called ambition, and there was nothing of the "ich dein" complex about him. He had simply discovered a durable delight in his work. The anatomy of this delight did not interest him. He knew an inscrutable phenomenon when he saw one. His modest and conservative use of a fine mind gave his judgments a great validity and brought him into a high position in the councils of this school. Knowing little of the art of verbiage he was not a skillful lecturer, but in the wards his teaching of students and of his interns was close to perfection. He used the treasures of his experience, not to dazzle by making the diagnosis at a glance, but to point out sound appraisal of obtainable evidence.

A large cause of Kenneth Blackfan's success in leadership was his gentle friendliness. He always made his associates feel that they were his comrades in the enjoyable adventure against disease. Also he was very brave. Beginning in his latter Baltimore years, he suffered a series of physical afflictions which he bore with an unbelievable fortitude. He was friendly and gentle and brave. The simplicity and the sincerity of these traits gave him his great beauty of personality.

* * * *

Such a record produces many reflections. I will offer you only one. We see very clearly the power of personality in the transmission of effective idealism. Undoubtedly Johns Hopkins, the University of Cincinnati and Harvard owe their Kenneth Blackfan to Richard Pearce. He lighted a flame of inquiry which burned quietly but always steadily thereafter. In Baltimore there was the irresistible impact of the vibrant enthusiasm of that most companionable of chiefs, John Howland. In Boston, over the last half of his physician years, Kenneth Blackfan, in his turn, gave to his students and interns, and to young investigators, an understanding of the joy of attempting a high use of knowledge. This is the purest of gifts because it is unconsciously bestowed and so has no taint of benevolence. So this story incidentally relates the process of transfer of the imperishable implement of progress which we call inspiration, by those who are worthy, in richness of character, to be its custodian.

—JAMES L. GAMBLE

Baltimore Years

I FIRST met Blackfan in 1912, when the Harriet Lane Home opened. The entire department then consisted of Dr. Howland, Blackfan, three interns and myself. Blackfan remained resident for six years. During that time he had the rich experience of living with sick children which was the foundation for his future preëminence as a clinician. In the medical school he quickly rose from Instructor to Associate and then to Associate Professor.

Blackfan lived in a suite of rooms on the ground floor of Harriet Lane. He was very hospitable and the suite became the lounging place for the entire Harriet Lane staff. He had little privacy, but he enjoyed being the center of the social life of the Harriet Lane. His good nature seemed to have no limits. I recall that his objections were very mild when I used to borrow his best traveling bag to carry puppies between the Harriet Lane and the Hunterian laboratory. I worked with him every single day and was a witness to the steady unfolding of his development. Since those happy days, when we were young together and life seemed endless, the world so stable, and plans such firm structures, we have been separated, but we have often met and corresponded and constantly received news of each other. It is sad for me to find myself asked to record him. His life was joyous; I shall not treat it somberly but gaily as it was in those happy, early Harriet Lane years.

When Blackfan began his career at the Harriet Lane, he was 29 years old, but had the fresh appearance of a boy. He assumed complete charge of the wards at once in the most natural way. Rapidly his abilities showed themselves.

From the day of his arrival, Blackfan was a most able clinician. His particular gifts were a fine power of observation, an excellent memory for experience and great stores of common sense. He was not, to my way of thinking, a brilliant clinician in the sense that he could arrive at conclusions by leaps of imagination denied to others; far better, he was an eminently sound clinician, one who could be relied on always to be safe and wise and never far from the mark. He was every inch a physician. His interests were centered in the welfare of the patient as an individual; the patient's problem was his problem, the sick child, his child. He so allied himself with the parents that he could truthfully say, "we". Diagnosis was of great interest but it remained the doorway to treatment. He soon became regarded by his colleagues at the Hospital

and Medical School and by the students as the ablest clinician in the department next to Dr. Howland, and in the last years at Johns Hopkins was commonly said to be as good as his chief.

Very soon after Blackfan began work in Baltimore he showed an interest in research work, but this interest was frowned on by Dr. Howland, who so encouraged the rest of us to do investigation that we were allowed opportunity for little else. But it was one of Dr. Howland's principles that the resident should limit his duties to the care of patients. The result of the disapproval was that Blackfan used to carry on his studies more or less clandestinely, often at night. Blackfan had an inquiring mind. He would have gone into the laboratories and learned the methods of chemistry if he had been given the chance. It was at Baltimore that he carried on his studies of hydrocephalus in collaboration with Dandy. It was there that he developed the treatment of dehydration by injection of salt solution into the peritoneal cavity, a procedure which marked distinct progress at that time. While at Baltimore, Blackfan wrote his well-known article on the treatment of meningococcus meningitis. This, which was the result of his own observations on Harriet Lane patients and the expression of his own ideas, remained altogether the best on that subject for many years.

I do not know of anyone who so loved to teach. He had strong beliefs as to what the student ought to know and great ability to drive his points home. His teaching had a paternal quality; so intense was his feeling for the importance of certain facts to the future physicians before him that his teaching often took a pleading form. He taught not only the students but the rest of us by pointing out the lessons which cases showed. Blackfan had the great respect of the students given to all teachers who themselves are outstanding examples of excellence in what they teach.

Blackfan used to find something interesting in almost everyone. He was one of those rare human beings who seemed to love humanity. If a child was badly behaved or ugly, Blackfan was attracted to him for that very reason. Children appealed to him greatly because of their simplicity. He was able to talk with a child on the child's own level; at will he could become a child himself. He was especially attracted to adults who possessed childlike simplicity. Ben, a negro of the old school, had stood as self-appointed doorman at the entrance of the Johns Hopkins Hospital from its beginning, and to us medical people was a particularly picturesque figure by reason of the steppage gait of locomotor ataxia. He always had a friend in the stables who supplied him

with tips on the races. I have seen Blackfan with great enjoyment stop again and again to listen to Ben's latest advice given with an air of greatest secrecy and importance. Ben never once picked the right horse, but Blackfan would often place a dollar or two on one just to witness the old negro's delight. When Blackfan traveled, he used to send Evans, the colored barber, a picture postal card. This Evans would carry around and show to everyone. But Blackfan had a remarkable understanding of his fellow human beings in high places. He used to amuse the intern staff no end by pretending on rounds with Dr. Howland that he did not know the diagnosis. He would give the information piece by piece to Dr. Howland, so that *he* might have the satisfaction of making it. "Why, Blackfan," Dr. Howland would exclaim, "the child has meningitis". In human relations Blackfan never made a psychological error.

Blackfan had a remarkable sympathy which enabled him to put himself in other people's places and see things from their points of view. Because of this and his inherent fineness, his relations with those around him were always pleasant. I never knew him to quarrel with anyone and indeed never on one single occasion saw him even lose his equanimity. I do not believe that he had an enemy in the world; he felt no enmity against anyone.

Dr. Howland was very fond of Blackfan, was vastly entertained by him and used to speak to me with pride of his achievements. Once when Blackfan was called in consultation by some of the internists and recognized that the patient had typhoid fever, no one was prouder than his chief. Was not Blackfan Dr. Howland's own product and did he not carry the banner of the department! I remember with what delight Dr. Howland told me that in a baseball game between the hospital team and a team from the Green Spring Valley Blackfan had fallen on his back in a puddle of mud, but had caught the fly.

In retrospect on those early years Blackfan possessed in full measure that rare combination of qualities, intelligence, wisdom, patience, toleration, human interest and understanding, which made him so splendid a physician and head of a department of pediatrics, so influential and important a person in the medical world and so valued an advisor and friend.

—EDWARDS A. PARK

Recollections of a Friendship

ISPEAK not as Dr. Blackfan's colleague from Yale, but as an ever-grateful pupil; I come to praise him as a friend and as a great children's physician, not to appraise his career in science, medical education, or child welfare.

It was Dr. Blackfan who first encouraged me to apply for a house-officership in pediatrics in the Johns Hopkins Hospital, helped me secure laboratory experience during the summer months prior to the beginning of my service; and then skillfully, as resident, inducted me into the mysteries of an internship. He taught me how to examine a baby—not just the body, but the whole child. As a children's physician, Dr. Blackfan was remarkably successful not only because of his great skill and learning, but also because he had the understanding which comes from love of children. I well recall his tribute, "There is just nothing in the world so lovely as a little new born baby!"

Dr. Blackfan remained a wise counselor to me from those first days thirty years ago; he lived the precept, "Let him have the key of thy heart, who hath the lock of his own." His counsel had the strength of unselfishness; when he left Baltimore, he wished me to work with him elsewhere but after several weeks of exploration of the new situation in relation to others, he advised me to accept another opportunity. This generous interest I so richly enjoyed encompassed in full measure many other men, particularly those of groups younger than the one to which I belong. I think Kenneth and I hardly ever held a conversation lasting above a half hour that discussion did not sooner or later come to center around the character, ability, and progress of some junior colleague. He was proud of the men in whose careers his wisdom, interest, and counsel had collaborated with their own ambition, ability, and industry.

From the time I first knew him, Dr. Blackfan labored hard in his profession; his achievements came not only from natural endowment but from following Osler's master-word, work, "the Open Sesame to every portal, the great equalizer in the world, the true philosopher's stone which transmutes all the base metal of humanity into gold." Dr. Blackfan was born to the mantle of healing, not to the purple of academic halls; but by his innate ability he won sponsorship from those in high places. Sir Thomas Browne would surely have said of him, "he that chiefly owes himself unto himself, is the substantial man."

Dr. Blackfan's sympathy and understanding came from his knowledge and from his own physical suffering. "In Love's service only the wounded soldiers can serve." Few friends of later years knew intimately of the agony of the 1915 period when tri-facial neuralgia laid him low for months, when work was impossible and life itself almost unendurable. It was my privilege to spend many nightly hours beside him during that troubled time and I am happy to be able to recount in this presence that no word of bitterness or self pity ever in my hearing passed his lips. He was, indeed, a brave soldier in his suffering and frustration.

In concluding these few and inadequate words of tribute to my friend, I recall the great affection he expressed, when first I knew him, for the woods and lake near the home where he spent his boyhood days and where in later years he and Mrs. Blackfan found surcease from care and responsibility. I recall also the last visit but one that I had with Dr. Blackfan; we stood at a window in his home watching the birds, safe from hostile creatures, feeding gayly in the sanctuary which Kenneth's own ingenuity had devised. And there came to me appropriate words written by a poet who also suffered greatly but who like Kenneth was captain of his own soul when the great Deliverer came.

A late lark twitters from the quiet skies;
And from the west,
Where the sun, his day's work ended,
Lingers as in content,
There falls on the old, grey city
An influence luminous and serene,
A shining peace.

The smoke ascends
In a rosy—and golden haze. The spires
Shine, and are changed. In the valley
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,
Closing his benediction,
Sinks, and the darkening air
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night—
Night with her train of stars
And her great gift of sleep.

So be my passing!
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing,
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.

—GROVER F. POWERS

Kenneth Blackfan with his House Officers

I SUPPOSE there are not many with a greater right than I to stand here and express great obligation to Dr. Blackfan. He would not have accepted that I owed him anything and perhaps I don't, any more than to my own father, but in my own work now I find myself day after day making my decisions only after half consciously imagining how Dr. Blackfan would have acted under similar circumstances. Certainly no other person has contributed so much to what I consider the good part of my education and training.

Dr. Blackfan's technic for maintaining the discipline and medical standards of his house staff was something I would give a great deal to be able to copy. He rarely gave direct orders. He never, quite literally never, lost his temper. His criticisms were seldom direct. They didn't need to be. Dr. Blackfan never admitted a definite policy to me, but almost every house officer at some time early in his service seemed to be chosen for a sort of public examination and suffered the unforgettable experience of being made to realize at ward rounds how thoughtless, how careless and how ignorant he was. At ward rounds one's patient would be presented and Dr. Blackfan with his quiet and logical discussion would make very clear before the group the details of one's mistakes. His presentation, however, would be quite impersonal. It would be a discussion of medical care in general and would not be directed at anyone personally. There would be no sarcasm, no ridicule and never any unfairness. The simple logic of the discussion was enough. One never needed to be directly criticized, for one such experience was enough. A ward round in which no additional diagnostic procedure or treatment was suggested by Dr. Blackfan was indeed a triumphant experience and it took me a long time before I ever attained it.

Ward rounds with Dr. Blackfan were thus often a frightening and dreaded experience to the young house officer, but Dr. Blackfan's real sympathy, his complete reasonableness and his personal interest in us was very apparent when one approached him in his office. His real human interest and love of children was delightfully apparent on ward rounds, particularly when certain types of problems were under discussion. I always was glad of the opportunity of directing his attention to the small children with those intangible feeding problems which are so hard to handle from any strict point of view of calories and vitamins. He would sometimes spend the whole hour with such a child,

playing with it and demonstrating, I think, the best of the art of medicine.

Dr. Blackfan had a memory and a very practical memory. It forgot most of the troublesome details and problems that he thought his house officers and residents should solve by themselves. It did not recall all the circumstances that made the case study or treatment of a patient difficult. Such a memory did not encourage us in repetition of excuses. He remembered vividly, however, the details of his patients for many years back and he also remembered all his own suggestions dropped in a very quiet voice regarding needed studies or certain steps in investigation of a patient.

I can well recall that when I had been in this hospital only a few weeks Dr. Blackfan one day merely suggested that I look up the subject of congenital diaphragmatic hernia. Some weeks later I was sitting in this amphitheatre feeling very unimportant, as indeed I was, and hoping to be inconspicuous, when in the midst of a discussion Dr. Blackfan turned and said,—not “Dr. Wilson, have you had an opportunity to study something about diaphragmatic hernia?”—that is what I would have said in his place, I am sure, but he said quite simply to the large audience, “Dr. Wilson has recently looked up the subject of diaphragmatic hernia and will tell us something of its incidence”. By the grace of heaven I had done so. If I had not nothing further would have been said and nothing further would need to have been said. One thus learned not to take his suggestions for reading lightly. Dr. Blackfan was always punctuating his discussion, formal or informal, with references to the literature or immediate resort to journals. The conferences in his office were always prolonged by his habit of interrupting discussions by a direct and immediate approach to his library and we spent many minutes of time with three or four people at once scrambling through books looking for something that had to be verified or clarified at just that moment.

In such a hospital as this, small controversies continually arise between the house officer and the patients and between the house officer and the students. As an officer under Dr. Blackfan one was apt to be on the losing side of any such decision when he was arbiter; fairly and logically so, because it became crystal clear as one worked with Dr. Blackfan that the happiness of patients came first of all, that the medical students' training came next, and that matters of our petty pride and prestige as house officers were after all unimportant.

Dr. Blackfan, as others, had certain set stories to tell. After eleven

years here one came to know them very well indeed. There was one about the patient in the Harriet Lane Hospital with meningococcus meningitis. I use the story myself now. I think it illustrates very well Dr. Blackfan's attitude towards sick children. When the parents of a child refuse to follow the directions of the house staff, when they become intolerably disagreeable, uncoöperative and lose faith in us or take the child out of the hospital before we are willing, the traditional "discharged against advice" slip is signed. That means that they take the child out on their own responsibility and that we officially wash our hands of them. Such patients are not allowed to return to the hospital and must seek medical care if they desire it elsewhere. This cold and righteous attitude was never approved by Dr. Blackfan. I never knew him to be happy about such a solution of a troublesome situation when it was brought to his attention. His feeling was always that something further could be done. The story which he would relate at the proper time was about the patient of his in Baltimore with meningococcus meningitis whose illiterate parents had no faith in the hospital and started to take the child home. Dr. Blackfan was unsuccessful in his attempts to dissuade them but finally prevailed upon them to bring the child back for visits to the Out-Patient Department. Here he carried out the difficult intraspinal treatment with serum day after day in the inconvenience of the Out-Patient Examining Room, and I am sure against the resistance of the hospital administration, until the patient got well. The patient did get well and that, of course, was the point of the story. Any stand on one's personal convenience or medical dignity was made to look very petty indeed against this success.

If we complained that the medical students were lazy, that they didn't carry out the duties assigned to them, that they came late or disappeared early, his first reaction was always the same—that we had not made the work interesting or profitable to them. After all, that was often the case and one could be very sure when such situations were brought up for discussion at one of our meetings in his office, that the results would always be a renewed stimulus toward better teaching techniques and renewed attempts to make the medical students more interested and their time here more profitable.

Sometimes we thought him a little unfair to us personally and it seemed that we became almost pawns in his maneuvers, but the pattern of his efforts, the personal Mecca towards which he was always moving is very simple and clear. It did not concern his personal interest or aggrandizement. With tremendous persistence and perfect consis-

tency, every plan of his and every action seemed directed quite simply toward making this a better clinic, able to give better medical care to the children here, to give better training to the students, and continuously to learn more about disease.

—JAMES L. WILSON

For the Two Hospitals

IT is an honor and a privilege to represent the Board of Managers of the Children's Hospital and the Board of Directors of the Infants' Hospital on the occasion of this memorial to Dr. Kenneth Blackfan.

For many years he has guided the medical progress of these two institutions and has through his devoted service, his vision and his ability brought great prestige to the two hospitals. He made an outstanding contribution to the life and the happiness of children through his skill as a clinician, a teacher, and as an investigator.

Fortunate were we, the members of the boards of the two hospitals, who came into close personal contact with him. His kindly understanding manner, his perseverance in carrying out those principles in which he believed, and his friendly sympathetic appreciation of the feelings of others—these things we shall always cherish and remember.

His service to the hospitals and the high standards that he set are a challenge to us as board members to carry on in the future the ideals that were his. We hereby record our deep appreciation of his service in behalf of little children, in behalf of medical science and the two hospitals, and in behalf of the community as a whole.

—ARTHUR G. ROTCH

Kenneth Blackfan, Physician to Children

IT is pertinent on this day to recall the spirit of the institution into which Kenneth Blackfan entered, a spirit which has prevailed since its founding, only partly expressed by the goals set by its founder, Dr. Francis Henry Brown, in 1869.

1. The medical and surgical treatment of the diseases of children.
2. The attainment and diffusion of knowledge regarding the diseases incident to childhood.
3. The training of young women in the duties of nurses."

In 1882 when the building on Huntington Avenue was dedicated "by appropriate religious exercises, to the service of God and the suffering children" . . . the occasion ended with an expression of . . . "the hope that the divine blessing will rest upon the institution in the future years". This hope, it seems to me, has been fully realized. As I have known the Children's Hospital, it has always represented applied religion expressed by complete devotion to its patients by its professional and nursing staffs. There has always been more song and laughter than tears and weeping in its wards. Sanctuary as well as hospital it has always been; its priests the physicians and surgeons, its abbess the efficient and courteous Miss Ida Smith, whose kindly smile always bestows benediction. Each generation sees advances in the treatment of disease, miraculous if contemplated through the darkness of earlier ignorance. Can we exclude these man-wrought miracles from the category of things divinely directed—however incompatible this thought may be to cultists who would deny to man, in exercise of knowledge, such recognition from above?

Great in achievement and lustrous in spirit was this institution in 1923 when Kenneth Blackfan came to carry further the medical torch. He took his place without fanfare or friction, completely in harmony with the spirit and tradition of the hospital. His immediate success was simply achieved, much in the manner of an expert woodsman, who, by a few adjustments of logs causes a smoldering fire to burst into flame.

Many changes rapidly followed. By the end of 1924 we find an appointment system in the Out-Patient Department in operation; a well-baby clinic in connection with the Out-Patient Department organized; arrangements with the Boston Lying-In Hospital for the care of sub-normal and of premature infants suffering from birth injuries com-

pleted; closer relations with the Orthopedic Department and the Medical Services existing, and a special clinic for diseases of the heart established. During the next year a special clinic in coöperation with the hospital dietitian was started in behalf of ambulatory diabetic children. The relations with the Lying-In Hospital were further cemented by the organization of a Discharge Clinic, for the purpose of examining each baby on discharge from that hospital. He also established close relations with the Department of Bacteriology in the Medical School, in order constantly to have on hand the diagnostic and therapeutic resources commanded by bacteriologists and immunologists. Later we find the developments, chiefly for special studies, of the Luetic Clinic, the Celiac Clinic, the Allergy Clinic, the Rheumatic Fever Clinic, and Neurological Clinic, the Eczema Clinic, the Thyroid Clinic and the Endocrine Clinic.

To Kenneth Blackfan belongs much of the credit for the comprehensive and effective organization of the Children's Hospital as it now stands. His long period as Resident in the Johns Hopkins Hospital gave him the opportunity to acquire completely the existing knowledge concerning the diseases of childhood. He *knew* where investigation was most urgently needed and where most promising of success. He realized fully the importance of laboratory departments in a hospital and was always on the alert in support of them toward development of greater efficiency in routine and in research. His relations with the Department of Pathology were educational and stimulating. By his questions, often in assumed ignorance, he provoked us to greater effort and thoroughness. Contacts with him were always pleasant; his requests involving additional work for us were almost impossible to refuse because of his eagerly expressed desire for new knowledge.

I confess at times to have feigned reluctance in order to experience the pleasure of his gentle wheedling and persistent coaxing. I should like to dwell on his personality and to recount the traits which compelled my warm affection and great admiration but these have been already sincerely and beautifully expressed by my colleagues. I must say that it always was a pleasure to work for him and with him and always a pleasant experience to probe his knowledge, because of the abundant reward.

The medical treatment of sick children and the attainment and diffusion of knowledge regarding their diseases was his calling, and practiced with devotion. He represented the type of hospital chief and professor that is all too rare, in the blending of science and the art of healing.

His publications, previous to 1923, were few and diverse in nature. His reputation was not based upon advanced achievements in a narrow field of research. If one scrutinizes closely the small number of papers written prior to 1923, of which he is the sole or senior author, one is impressed not so much by the evidence of unusual scientific ability as by their simplicity and pertinency to a few of the outstanding medical problems of that day and this day.

Based solely upon bibliography, the choice of Dr. Blackfan would have been difficult to understand. We who came to know him well realized that many important advances in knowledge of the nature and treatment of children's diseases were to his credit, although often published in papers not bearing his name. We need not dwell upon the importance of his scientific work after 1923. His great success with us has been the result of the organization he developed—his wise selection of capable young men and the problems he saw and the opportunities he provided for their investigation.

A great conductor need not be a composer, or even a virtuoso on any instrument in the orchestra. In the field of scientific study of the diseases of childhood, Kenneth Blackfan was a great conductor as well as an investigator of distinction.

Occasionally he would ask me to see a patient in the wards with him, and these visits have left a deep impression upon me, not only because of the thoroughness of his study of the patient, but because of his deep and compassionate concern for the child. I have had personal experience of his kindly concern for the parent.

Kenneth Blackfan was one of the outstanding agents through which the divine blessing implored by the Board of Governors in 1882 has been granted. Let us hope that his character, his personality, and his professional qualifications will be the foremost attributes sought for in the selection of his successor.

—S. BURT WOLBACH

